

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 10, 2017

Agenda Item: Bynum Reservoir Acquisition (R4)

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

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Background: In cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), FWP has developed and managed the 40-acre Bynum Reservoir FAS under a 20-year no fee permit. During that time FWP has invested over \$51,000 in capital improvements such as boat launch, latrine, camp sites, parking and road. Bynum Reservoir FAS has four established campsites which are utilized year around. The current permit expired in May of 2015 and the BLM approached the Department about purchasing the FAS parcel and then acquiring another 40-acre parcel. Since FWP is a government agency that offers public recreation opportunities at this site, it is able to acquire the 80 acres for only a \$100 filing fee. The permitted 40-acre parcel is already functional and has been maintained by FAS staff for the last 20 years. The other 40-acre parcel already has legal access to the entire parcel and will require minimal improvements once we take ownership. Anglers and campers utilize both sections.

Public Involvement Process & Results: In December 2015, the Commission endorsed the Department's request to perform due diligence toward acquisition of these parcels. FWP and the BLM released a joint Environmental Assessment proposing acquisition which was advertised through the FWP website and public notices in newspapers. Copies were available at the main FWP office in Helena and R4 office in Great Falls. Public comment period ran from March 22-April 25, 2016. There were no comments made during the comment period. The R4 Supervisor subsequently signed the Decision notice to proceed with the site acquisition as planned.

Alternatives and Analysis: The FAS parcel is already being managed by FWP. The BLM has asked the Department to take both parcels since they no longer have any interest in the area. FWP can manage both parcels with minimal increase in maintenance cost or staff time. If FWP took ownership of this parcel it would fence the boundary, sign the area with property markers and maintain the site as is done at all fishing access sites. No major maintenance is required once we take possession of this parcel. If FWP does not take ownership, and if FWP was successful in securing another lease of the main 40-acre parcel from BLM, management of the existing FAS would remain the same. Pioneered roads, campsites, and other forms of resource damage may occur at the second BLM parcel, as FWP would not have jurisdiction to manage that area.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The Department recommends the Commission endorse its request to purchase two separate 40-acre parcels on Bynum Reservoir. This will allow FWP to offer more access to the reservoir and also to improve the current conditions of the area.

Proposed Motion:

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission direct the Department to finalize purchase of two 40-acre parcels on Bynum Reservoir from the Bureau of Land Management.